EDUCATION TELECOMMUNICATIONS COUNCIL
NOTES
March 21, 2002

I.   WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The March 21, 2002, meeting of the Education Telecommunications Council was held at Iowa Public Television and various ICN sites. The following members were present: Chet Rzonka for Robert Barak, Board of Regents; Al Bode, ISEA; James Bodensteiner, Board of Regents; Merv Cronbaugh, IACCT; Kathy Decker, IAICU; Mary Gannon, IASB; Ed Gambs, SAI; David Montgomery, DE/CIANS; Kathryn O'Shaughnessy, ISEA; Pam Pfitzenmaier, IPTV; Kay Runge, DE/Libraries; Gail Sullivan, DE; Mary Travillian, AEA Boards; and Robert Vittengl, AEA Boards. Greg Davis, IASB; Gene Gardner, IACCT; John Hartung, IAICU; and Mick Starcevich, SAI, were absent.

The following visitors were also present: Tony Crandell and Kay Bolton, ICN; Roger Rezabek, RTC 7; Julie Thomas, RTC 6; Kay Slouha for John Haack, RTC 10; Kathy Guilgot, RTC 1; Ellen Kabat Lensch, RTC 9; Rebecca Hannum, Region 16 ICN Scheduler; Bruce McKee, RTC 2; Trista Peitzman and Pat Thieben, RTC 11; Dennis Eitmann, RTC 13; Judy Jones, State Library; Kathy Goebel, RTC 5; Linda Abel, RTC 15; Stacy Gibbs, RTC 14; and Debbie Fiscus and Kathy Borlin, IPTV.

II.   ISSUES
IIA.   Appointment of Planning Committee for Joint Meeting

The following people have volunteered for the planning committee for the Joint Meeting on June 20. Planning will be done via email or ICN.
Representing ETC members: Pam Pfitzenmaier, Mary Travillian, Kathy O'Shaughnessy
Representing ICN: Kay Bolton, Julie Johnson, Patty Wood
Representing Schedulers: Kay Bolton will contact other schedulers
Representing RTCs: Kathy Guilgot; Kathy G will ask another RTC member
Representing TIE members: Pam will contact TIE members

IIB.   Status of Committee Assignments from 12/20/01 ETC Meeting

There were motions made at the December 2001 ETC meeting to form various sub-committees--the status of each follows:
Three sub-committees to investigate policy issues, financial issues and technical issues: Those committees did not get appointed. In December, there was a discussion of possible transition of duties from IPTV to ICN related to video classrooms. That proposal has since been dropped by the ICN. Given that the future plans of the ICN are in transition with the retirement of Tommy Thompson and draft legislation to consideration consolidation of various state agencies into a Department of Administration, it was suggested that membership to the three sub-committees not be named.

<u>One sub-committee to investigate the financial implications of ICN pricing, funding, and the impact on educational institutions:</u>
There was also some discussion concerning pricing of future ICN services. Options such as pricing by bandwidth, "bits" used or current pricing (per minute for long distance; per month for data circuits; per minute for video conferencing; per channel/bit for ISDN, etc). It was suggested that the formation of this sub-committee be put on hold until after the appointment of the new CEO of ICN, as Tommy Thompson is retiring on June 30.

<u>MOTION 1</u>
Merv Cronbaugh moved to defer action on the establishment of the sub-committee on ICN pricing to a time deemed appropriate by the ETC chairperson. Pam Pfitzenmaier seconded.
Ayes--12; Nays--0; Not Voting--0; Absent--4. Motion passed unanimously.

As follow-up to another motion at the December 2001 ETC meeting, Pam Pfitzenmaier reported that the ETC will formally ask the Iowa Alliance for Advanced Telecommunications Services to work with the ETC on the issues related to Part III leases and future elementary and middle school/ public library connectivity. The Alliance has not met since December but is scheduled to meet within a few months.

The ad hoc sub-committee related to this issue will be on hold until the Iowa Alliance meets again.

IIC.   Approval of 2003 Educational Video Scheduling Deadlines
The 2003 Educational Video Scheduling Deadlines were discussed and a couple of simple recommendations were suggested. The changes will be further discussed at the joint meeting on June 20 and feedback will be requested in the interim, especially from ICN schedulers and regional councils.

<u>MOTION 2</u>
The ETC tentatively approves the 2003 Educational Video Scheduling Deadlines pending feedback received prior to and at the Joint ETC/RTC/Schedulers/TIE meeting in June where final approval will be made. All in favor. Motion passed.

IID.   Legislative Update
Tami Fujinaka was unable to attend this meeting but did provide a document of the latest legislative news concerning the ICN. Mary Gannon, Gail Sullivan, and Pam Pfitzenmaier also provided some information.
  A. Oversight committee has been given the responsibility for the proposed new consolidated agency (Department of Administration). It appears that Oversight will not have any appropriations' duties this session.
  B. The ICN video subsidization appropriation will go to the Justice systems budget (last year it was in Oversight). The video subsidy request from the ICN has been reduced in hopes that the E-rate discount will be available.

C. The ATM upgrade is before infrastructure committee.
D. The RTC appropriations request is no longer in Oversight; it will go before Education appropriations.

IIE.   Status of RTC Funds

Kathy Borlin stated that remaining funds for FY 02 RTC duties have been sent to nearly all the RTCs. There was still one RTC that needed to send in an invoice but they had been contacted by Kathy. She reminded the RTCs that state funds need to be expended by June 30—the funds cannot be obligated for use after that date. That means that goods need to be received and services utilized by June 30 or the funds revert back to the state. The RTC checks have been sent to the fiscal agent of each RTC. If you have not received your check, or if you have further questions, please contact Kathy Borlin at 515-242-4173 or kathy@iptv.org.

Pam Pfitzenmaier stated that the RTC funding level for FY 03 is unknown at this time, but there is an assumption of funding cuts. RTCs are asking how the cuts will be distributed among the RTCs and whether the RTC will be expected to fulfill all duties given anticipated funding cuts.

This will be an agenda item for the Joint meeting in June. The ETC will need to make a decision at the June 20 meeting.

Discussion followed.

IIF.   Memo to K-12 ICN Video Sites

The Technical Information Exchange (TIE) members have asked that the ETC provide a document that the RTCs will send to K-12 ICN video sites concerning budgeting and replacement of equipment in ICN rooms. A draft copy of the proposed document with a draft cover letter was distributed to members and guests. The cover letter tells the K-12 sites who to contact at IPTV and/or the technical support person in the region for information about equipment needs and technical support options. The RTCs may customize the document for their region. The State Library will also utilize the document for the public libraries that are planning to add an ICN site or update equipment in their video classroom.

The TIE members have found that some schools are purchasing and installing ICN video classroom equipment that is not easily supported by either the regional tech or IPTV. It was emphasized that schools are not aware prior to this purchase that it will be difficult for cost-effective support to their ICN video classroom equipment if they purchase "non-standard" classroom components.

The documents were approved by the ETC pending update of prices and information contained in each.

III.   UPDATES
III.A. Wireless Project

Tony Crandell, ICN, provided an update and distributed a report on the proposed strategic direction of Wireless Communications Services for the State of Iowa as developed by the Iowa Alliance for Advanced Telecommunications Services. For further information contact Tony Crandell at the ICN.

III.B. E-rate
Pam Pfitzenmaier provided an update on the e-rate discount program. The FCC has released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) asking for input on the e-rate program. Pam mentioned that the Iowa Department of Education will send comments in response to the NPRM. The deadline for these comments is April 6th and the reply deadline is May 4th. The FCC is very interested in hearing comments from schools and libraries themselves, not just at the state level.

Year 5 of the E-rate program is the up-coming funding year (starting July 1, 2002) and applications were submitted in November-January. Year 5 will be the first year that the Department of Education filed a statewide consortium application for ICN video for all Iowa schools and libraries.

Mary Gannon brought up the requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and the fact that superintendents have called her saying there are vendors who have been attempting to sell them services and equipment they don't need (under the CIPA act). Mary Travillian stated that school districts have been informed of the issue through their AEA USF contact (as well as other groups) who is working with the USF contact in each school district. There is a video that is available through AEA 5 containing information on the "Internet Filtering Shootout," a 3-hour ICN session that questioned different filtering vendors about their products. For information about the video, contact Scott Fosseen at sfosseen@aea5.k12.ia.us.

Mary Travillian asked how the e-rate discount shows up on the ICN billing information. She urged that the billing statement needs to be clarified to note which year the e-rate discount applies to.

III.C. Iowa Virtual High School
Pam Pfitzenmaier provided initial information on the Iowa Virtual High School project. Pam mentioned that the work on the Iowa Virtual High School actually started several years ago when the ICN was first created. The sharing of resources (courses/classes) via ICN has provided Iowa high school students with courses they could not otherwise access in their school.

About a year ago, the AEAs conducted a study of virtual high schools in other states, as well as assessed policy issues and funding issues that might contribute to or inhibit further development of course sharing in Iowa.

The ETC itself has actually been conducting research related to virtual high schools. The data collected and analyzed by Eastern Iowa Community College for the ETC shows the enrollment in ICN-based courses, including the provider(s) of these courses.

This spring that data collection will be Web-based and will be expanded to include Web-based courses. While the Eastern Iowa data includes K-12 and post-secondary on the survey instrument, it is relatively easy to determine high school enrollments in these courses.

Currently, there is no count on web-based courses being offered or taken in Iowa nor is there data on self-contained courses via computer for high school students (such as CD Rom).

Pam mentioned that there are several initial steps in defining and establishing a virtual high school:
- What activities related to virtual high school are occurring in Iowa?
- What are the unmet needs for high school students (what types of courses?)
- What are the big issues that we would have to address to meet these needs?
- How will these issues be overcome and needs met in a quality manner?

Roger Rezabek suggested a web site that has interesting information about virtual high schools. Technology Source Newsletter has a site on the web regarding education technology where you can find a 5-page article called, "The ABCs of Virtual High Schools," that interviews people from Illinois, Michigan, Florida, and other states who have virtual high schools. Interested people can search the web for "Technology Source" and Roger will forward the web address to Pam.

A listserv and Web site will eventually be set up of individuals who are highly interested in following the progress of the Iowa Virtual High School. If you are interested in receiving more information, please let Pam know. Discussion followed.

III.D. Items of Interest from ETC Members
Mary Gannon stated that the IASB is acting as "guinea pig" for National Association of School Boards (NSBA) in establishing online learning for school board members that teaches better boardsmanship, school finance, etc. It is an active project but is in the experimental stage at this time.

Merv Cronbaugh voiced his concern that in this legislative session, the budget crisis has caused educators and related agencies (human services, for example) to "feed upon" each other rather than work together for common purposes. Further, Merv expressed his opinion that we should demand of our legislators that they look at potential additional revenue sources rather than just consider budget cuts. Those potential revenue sources may only be realized by having the legislature undo some of the actions of past sessions.

Mary Gannon gave a brief update on the charter school legislation passed by the Iowa legislature. This legislation provides that a charter school must be public and must be under the jurisdiction of a local school board. The legislation allows Iowa school districts to tap into federal funds (that may also include regional high schools and virtual high schools).

Bob Vittengl raised concerns that several of the school administrators in his region (region 1) had become frustrated when they wanted to add their ICN site to a session and were told by the session sponsor that they could not. Bob shared that the administrators had offered to pay the cost of adding the site and had given "permission" that their site be added. Discussion followed. It was suggested that this item be added to the agenda at the June ETC meeting for more in-depth discussion.

III.E. Items of Interest from Guests

Roger Rezabek brought to the attention of members the fact that the ICN cancellation policy which was originally discussed at the December 1999 ETC meeting has not been followed up. The RTC Coordinators held a meeting recently where this policy was once again discussed and they made the following recommendation (3 options):

1. Change the cancellation policy to be consistent with the "On Demand" policy--no time limit (this was recommended by the ETC at their September 2000 meeting)
2. OR Consider Saturday a business day. Cancellations would occur 48 hrs. prior on Thursday (rather than Wednesday)
3. OR Clarify 48 hr. cancellation policy--adding that weekend cancellations must be completed by midnight on Wednesday.

Following a lengthy discussion, the following motion was made:

MOTION 3
Kay Runge moved that the original motion made at the September 2000 ETC meeting to recommend that the ICN Credit Policy be consistent with the "On Demand" policy be followed up and brought to the attention of the ICN again.

Pam Pfitzenmaier seconded. Ayes--14, Nays--0, Not Voting--0, Absent--4. Motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The March 21, 2002, meeting of the Education Telecommunications Council adjourned at 11:30am. The next meeting of the ETC will be the Joint ETC/RTC/Schedulers/TIE meeting held June 20, 2002, at Iowa Public Television.

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